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CHILD WELFARE

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TRENDS IN PUBLIC SERVICES TO CHILDREN*

Crystal N. Potter

and

Amelia Igel

Department of Welfare
of the City of New York

New York City's experiment in reaching all children who need foster home care illustrates trends among public agencies.

WE cannot discuss trends in the public services without also including some discussion regarding trends in the private services. As we have finally succeeded in integrating the services for the *total child*, so we now must succeed in planning *total services* on a comprehensive basis, and not on the chance basis of which "Intake" door a child happens to enter.

The rights of children in our democracy are well known. In fact, our knowledge of their rights and needs far surpasses our ability and present resources to meet them.

In 1909 the White House Conference established a standard guide to social workers in outlining the needs of dependent children, the right of the child to have his own home, to have assistance in remaining in that home, and to be removed only for urgent and compelling reasons.

The 1919 Conference emphasized the responsibility of the community for child labor protection, for educational opportunity, and maternal and child health protection for all children. It also emphasized the necessity for developing specialized services.

In 1930 the Conference brought together specialists from the fields of public health, education and social welfare and resulted in the promulgation of a "Bill of Rights" or Children's Charter, which is still the goal toward which services to children are directed.

The White House Conference of 1940 focused attention upon the objective of upholding the strengths of democracy in the environment of children. This conference stated, "Recognition of the principle that the welfare of every child is of concern to the whole country, implies that all authorities of government, federal, state and local—and private agencies as well—share responsibility for making this concern effective."

We look toward 1950, says Katherine Lenroot, as an opportunity of appraising the gains which have been made in order to stake out future goals.

Throughout the field of child welfare, the earlier focus on the protection of dependent children, children disadvantaged and in need of special services, has enlarged to encompass the needs and rights of all children in our democracy.

The Need for Public Agencies

With this larger focus has come recognition that private child welfare resources cannot by themselves

meet such over-all needs. As in the fields of education, public health, and family welfare, there is an increasing movement in child welfare not only toward increased public *financial* support to private agencies, but also toward increased *public services* to ensure protection and care for all children.

As a result of this trend, many questions must be answered, such as: What is the significance of this development? What does this change forecast? What are to be the roles of the voluntary agencies and of the public agencies? The trends in the development of public services to children, we believe, should imply no threat to the continuation of voluntary agencies. The change in relationship is not an "either, or" threat—it implies a "not only, but also" co-operation. It does involve some lessening of individual determination of program, or isolationism, as it were, on the part of agencies. It does involve a community determination of program, so that over-all planning between public and private agencies, and among private agencies themselves, can be co-ordinated to provide adequate services to all children in a given community requiring these services.

We have no ability to prophesy in terms of the ultimate development of these trends; but first let us look to the record to see what needs have been developing and why.

Many changes have occurred during the past two decades which have affected not only the number but also the "type" of children in need of care away from their own homes. The growth of public health measures, the advancement of Social Security legislation and Workmen's Compensation, the development of public assistance programs, family services and child guidance, the increase in the industrial employment of women with children, the rise in the birth rate, the increase of family breakdown, and the housing shortage during the postwar period have all contributed to the changing picture of children's needs.

In June, 1948, in a paper by Katherine Lenroot entitled, "The American Scene as a Background for

* Delivered at the Midwest Regional Conference, May 4, 1949.

a 1950 Conference on Children," the following facts were pointed out:

... in 1947 nearly 4,000,000 children have lost one or both parents by death;

... 700,000 children are in homes broken by divorce, desertion, or separation;

... over 100,000 babies are born out of wedlock each year, and over two fifths of the unmarried mothers are under the age of 20 years;

... about 3,900,000 live births occurred in 1947, the largest number ever reported in this country; this represents an increase of over 50% as compared with 1940 figures;

... the number of children under the age of 5 years in 1947 was 36% higher than in 1940, but in the western states the increase in this age group was 76%.

As a result of the increase in birth rates, more than 5,000,000 children will probably be added to the elementary school population within the next decade. It is obvious that there will be tremendous pressure for expansion on schools, and on health and social agencies. This will be particularly acute in the West, where the greatest increase in child population under the age of 5 years has occurred.

These country-wide figures have significance in this discussion only as they can be related to the prevailing pattern of child care in each community, the resources available, and the needs of children. In New York City, for instance, the increased birth rate and the complex living conditions in a post-war world of housing shortages, broken homes and increased tensions of living, have not yet brought an increase in the applications for the care of children outside their own homes. Indeed, in New York City the number of children cared for at public expense away from their own homes has been reduced from 21,000 in 1939 to 14,000 in 1949.

The Changing Picture

The most obvious trend in child care in New York City over the past 20 years is related to the type of child who requires care away from his own home. He is rarely an orphan—less than 2% of the 14,000 children under care are full orphans. He is rarely the fair-haired, blue-eyed child shown in our publicity. But he is usually a child bursting with problems of personality and behavior, stemming from the maladjustments or illness in his own family. He needs, more than ever, individual attention, care and love. He cannot be helped by either the traditional orphanage or by the poorly paid foster mother, whose satisfactions supposedly come from caring for children. He needs an individualized treatment program, whether in an institution or foster home.

Certain trends in the modification of present child-care facilities are already apparent:

the institution now identified as a study treatment center for small groups of emotionally disturbed children where professionally

trained cottage parents supported by the services of psychiatrists, psychologists, educators and social workers can diagnose and treat each child in accordance with his needs;

the subsidized boarding home where trained foster parents, again with the services of the professions mentioned before, can help children rebuild their lives;

the small residence club where adolescents may try themselves out in the competitive life of today with the backing and support of the residence director;

the modification of programs within existing institutions so that the program will fit the children, not the children the program;

a scientific approach to determining the board rate in foster family homes and the inclusion of a payment for services;

expansion of adoption services with the experimental use of fees;

expansion of casework services and better co-ordination of these services between the public and private agencies so that the children and parents may be united at the earliest possible time;

the introduction of protective casework services in authoritative settings;

the delineation of responsibilities for dependent children between the judicial and the welfare authorities;

and moving on to the development of preventive services in the community, an increase in the activity of those agencies, public and private, welfare, educational and child guidance so that children may be helped to stay with their own families wherever possible.

These trends are corroborated in the current reports of the Child Welfare League of America and by the increasing number of requests to the League for information, surveys and consultation service.

As we said previously, our knowledge of the needs of children is far beyond our current ability and resources to provide adequate services for them. It has been almost impossible to shift gears quickly enough to meet the changing needs. Some institutions and agencies were originally incorporated with rigid definitions of children whom they could serve. Not all of these rules and regulations require legislative action to change the program to meet the need. In fact, it may only require an enlightened Board, interested in children rather than tradition. But the gears in a public agency also move slowly, so that any change in program or increased financial support rarely meets the necessity of the moment.

Public and Private Funds for Child Care

Child care is expensive now, and developing programs to meet the needs of children will be even more expensive. The costs of the individualized programs in group care and the payment for services provided by the foster parents cannot, in most instances, be met by private contributions alone. One institution caring for about 80 children is paying \$2,600 per year for each child. Those who do not understand what this means in the way of prevention of further social breakdown and the future expenditure of funds say,

"Why, I could send my boy to college for that amount!" It is true, but we as professional workers must be prepared to justify these expenditures as a practical as well as a philanthropic measure. The primary need in resolving the present and future child welfare problem is one for education, so that an enlightened community will know who these children are and what they need; and thus that adequate moral and financial support can be assured.

Granted, then, that we have the knowledge and the will to modify the child-care services to meet changing needs, how can the costs of care be met? Is this a public responsibility? Inasmuch as public agencies are concerned about the welfare of every child in need of care, the public agency has responsibility to provide or develop adequate services in so far as private funds are inadequate and public funds may be made available.

Does this mean that the public agency must assume more responsibility for direct operation of child care programs?

Again let us look at the record.*

"Nation-wide attention has been given by state and local public welfare agencies to the development and furtherance of public foster care facilities.

"State-wide foster family care programs exist or are in the process of development in 40 states. One of the primary obstacles to providing foster family care to every child in need of such care is the limited number of staff available locally who are qualified to provide such service.

"Public welfare agencies do not have as much responsibility for the operation of public institutions or group care facilities as for foster family care, possibly because the need is not as general.

"An estimate of \$34,367,333 is known to have been expended by state and local public welfare agencies for foster care (exclusive of care for delinquents or physically and mentally handicapped children). New York City alone spends about \$11,000,000 of this sum."

In 26 states reporting comparable data, over 19 million dollars was spent, 53% of which was spent through voluntary agencies. The percentage of funds spent through the private agencies is made higher by New York State, which spends 71% of its funds through voluntary agencies.

The public funds coming from state and local sources are used in a variety of ways. In some states the public agency finances and operates the major child welfare services; in others, public funds are granted to private agencies to operate the services; and in between are many variations of public and private operation. In some instances the relationship between public and private agencies is such that the private agency operating the program is

designated as a quasi-public one. This sharing of responsibility between public and private agencies has many problems connected with it. Whenever public funds are spent, the public agency must take responsibility for the way they are spent and the children they serve. This in no way means that the public agency must assume operation of all child-care programs.

The primary question that must be considered is:

Are children in need of service getting this service? If not, how can we ensure that they will get it? What is the best use of public funds? Of private funds? And which agency is best prepared to give this service?

Each community, each state, will of necessity have to answer this question in accordance with the problems confronting it and the resources available to it. The acceptance in principle of public agency responsibility for providing for children is unrealistic, unless it is supported by adequate funds, just as the private agencies' desire to care for all children in need of care is academic unless funds are sufficient to provide care for all children needing care.

In some states public funds may be used for dependent and neglected children cared for by private agencies only if the child has been made a ward of the court. Insistence on the retention of this pattern of child care seems unsatisfactory, as the trend should be toward more voluntary commitments whenever possible. Whatever its system, there is a considerable amount of paper work necessitated—reports, statistics, formulation and carrying out of policies, reports on children—all necessary to insure eligibility to receive public funds. Considerable duplication may arise, questions of supervisory responsibility, standards of care and gaps in coverage. Questions of guardianship, custody, the rights of children and the rights of agencies to define their area of operation have arisen. There are the problems of selectivity *vs* coverage, quantity *vs* quality, my children *vs* your children—but let us look to the future when we will have selectivity *and* coverage, quality *and* quantity for our children. Better service to children can often be secured through a combined use of public and private funds, as well as public and private services.

New York City's Experiment

In the past, public services for children have often been questioned in terms of the ability of the public agency to retain satisfactory standards of care, and the possibility of political domination, the difficulties in finding local staff or possible disregard of religious training of the children. The public agencies have made real and valuable contributions toward im-

* From a study made by the APWA of foster care services provided in 1947 through public welfare agencies in the United States, the District of Columbia, Alaska and Hawaii.

proving standards in child welfare by stressing the principles

- that services must be provided for *all* children;
- that the child must be considered as an integral part of his family, and that supportive service must be provided to help him remain with his own family wherever possible;
- that the family's responsibility for the child continues even when it is determined that the child must be placed;
- that the financial contribution a parent makes toward the care of his child is a real factor in reuniting child and family at the earliest possible moment;
- that there can be no discrimination toward a child because of race;
- and that in certain communities, it should be stated that there need be no discrimination in the assignment of staff because of race or creed.

It is reasonable to demand that any public welfare service operate in accordance with the same standards and criteria established by the best private agencies. The private agencies, however, have been unable to care for all children, despite valiant efforts.

On February 1st of this year New York City established a public foster home program in an attempt to provide foster family care so that all children needing care could receive it under either public or private agencies. This has presented many questions regarding the respective areas in which public and private agencies in New York City should operate. The important question, however, is how all children requiring foster care will receive it at the time it is needed. This is being studied by the Mayor's Committee on Child Care and by a Technical and Professional Advisory Committee composed of representatives of the private and public agencies.

The first project was the setting up of qualifications for staff. It was found that some members of the Department of Welfare staff did not meet these requirements, since they had had little recent experience in the direct supervision of children away from their own homes. Therefore an experienced Director and a Training Supervisor were borrowed from outside the Department for a year, through the help of the State Department of Welfare with funds from the Child Welfare Services of the United States Children's Bureau.

The Committee agreed upon the most important aspects of training (the study of the child; the study and selection of the foster home; and the worker's responsibility to the child, his own parents and his foster parents in the foster home). A three-week training experience was planned and conducted by three private agencies representing different religious groups. Through a well-directed training period, staff members telescoped an unusual amount of actual experience and orientation into this brief period, which the Committee believes will serve as the basic groundwork for a continued learning of the skills and knowledge inherent in the special field of foster home placement.

The Need for Joint Planning

The care of children is as good or as bad, as inclusive or as limited, as the community itself wants

it to be. It has a direct relationship to the quantity and quality of the services provided by the private and public child-caring agencies and the amount of funds available to them from public and private sources.

The Technical and Professional Advisory Committee is attempting to delineate areas of responsibility in child care for the public and private agencies. The significance of this joint planning is that public and private agencies have accepted a mutual goal in developing adequate services for all children who need foster care, which entails that each private agency review its services as part of the over-all community pattern for child welfare. It is an accepted principle that no agency can operate as an isolationist. The public agencies throughout the country have had to have an open-door policy; and unfortunately, in many instances, have found themselves caring for a group of children difficult to place because of the type of problem presented as to handicap, race, age, sex, or intelligence. For this group the private agencies might well offer their resources of skilled services, since the facilities available to the public agency fall far short, in many instances, of being adequate for the particular child. Joint planning between public and private agencies can prevent the development of a public program for such "residual" groups of children.

The trend, no doubt, is toward increased public financial support of child welfare services. The APWA recognized the need for expansion of public foster care facilities in Point VI of the Public Welfare Platform, which recommends

"that the Federal Government participate financially in the cost of providing care to needy children under the supervision of the state."

The "how" of utilizing this support, whether from local, state or federal funds, must be determined by each community.

The rights of children are a precious responsibility in which both public and private agencies share. There can be no sound development of services unless public and private agencies can agree on a goal to be reached and the method through which the goal can be attained. This concept, as stated previously, involves change. But let us not be afraid of change. We may not formulate the perfect plan; we may not reach the goal immediately. If we look to the future and build for the future in our child welfare services, we will all be working for a better world—a world in which no child will go hungry, or homeless, or be deprived of the help which will make him a good citizen tomorrow.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN WITH PROBLEMS

Margaret Kahn

Supervisor, Foster Home Department
Jewish Child Care Association of New York

This article describes the development of the adoption program of children with unusual problems in their individual or inherited situations, which was discussed by Belle Wolkomir in the February, 1947, issue of the BULLETIN, under the title, "The Unadoptable Baby Achieves Adoption."

The new way of working for the adoption of such children has been experimented with by the Jewish Child Care Association of New York, because the staff did not feel that sound practice could continue to place children in boarding homes which could later become adoptive homes.

PRIOR to 1929, Jewish infants in New York City were cared for by the Hebrew Home for Infants, an institution for children under three. After 1929 the Foster Home Department began to place babies in foster homes. Many of these babies had mothers in custodial care or mothers who had drifted out of their lives. In spite of many instances of serious factors in the backgrounds of these children, most of them placed in permanent homes early in infancy developed well, and quite a few of these children had become "absorbed" into their foster homes as time went on. For these, then, the question of adoption became paramount. In 1938 the Foster Home Department, then the Foster Home Bureau, was designated by the Department of Welfare as empowered to do adoptions.

The Child Adoption Committee is the regular adoption agency for Jewish children in New York City. The child, in order to be acceptable for adoption with C.A.C., had to be of higher than dull normal intelligence, and his background had to be free of a constellation of mental or social pathology, and of any physical disease which might possibly be transmittable. The child had, of course, to be legally free for adoption, and his own physical, emotional, and intellectual development had to be "normal."

There were many children under the care of the Foster Home Bureau who became legally eligible for adoption during the course of placement with us, but who were not socially eligible for placement at C.A.C. according to the agency's current standards. It was the deep conviction of the Director and Assistant Director of the Foster Home Bureau that these children had the same right as other children to secure family ties. It was also felt that the younger a child was when he got to his permanent home, the greater his opportunity for intellectual and emotional growth. Babies who had no one to plan

for them were therefore placed in "prospective adoptive" homes on a boarding basis with a full understanding by the prospective adoptive applicants that the situation might or might not eventuate in adoption. As already brought out, many of the children became absorbed into their homes and did well. This, then, was really pioneering, since it gave permanent family ties to a great number of children who would otherwise have continued to drift and would have become the "lost" children in the community. It also pointed the way toward community responsibility for finding a home for every child who needs adoption, even though there is some problem in his situation.

The adoption program in the Foster Home Department grew out of its general setting, which is foster home placement, and it remained an integral part of the general placement program for many years. As new trends in casework thinking developed in the child placement field in general, and in adoption in particular, and we furthered our understanding and skill, our adoption program emerged for us as the separate service and distinct function that it really is. It is a function specifically different from boarding in its intention and focus. It has a rhythm and time span of its own and a separate set of responsibilities.

Development of New Practices

In the course of time, we began to feel that if adoptive parents have to live in fear of parents' possibly returning into the child's life, or with the fear of whether the baby will develop normally, there can't be any real security; that the baby feels this, and is affected by the undercurrent of suspense and tension. We also felt that the agency, in having to discharge its responsibility in seeing that the baby is developing normally, had to stay in the situation

much more fully and for a longer time than is right for adoption. This often put the adoptive parents and the agency in the untenable position of the family's having to "defend" the baby, as it were, from the agency. Now, in having conviction about our babies as to their capacity for normalcy and growth, and in having the legal aspects clear and settled at the time of placement in an adoptive home, the worker is free to help the baby and the adoptive parents in coming together as a family unit. The agency now recognizes that good adoptive placement is based on an ability to move away from the agency, and in choosing adoptive parents, one of our criteria is their capacity to become an independent family unit. Our program in the past was based on selecting foster parents who could live with an undue amount of uncertainty and risk, and we had to ask the question of whether the need to have a baby at so much cost didn't have a neurotic quality in relation to the degree of insecurity that these people had, or in relation to the kind of possessiveness which could stand in the way of letting a child develop at his own pace and in his own uniqueness.

Since "adoption is for life," we also felt, along with other adoption agencies, that in knowing our babies and in having some guide as to their potential capacity in personality development and endowment we can make use of the unique skill in child placement, namely, that of selecting for each child the home best suited to him, the home that can accept him for what he is; and of selecting for the adoptive parents the baby that can give them the greatest satisfaction.

We now no longer place children in adoptive homes until they are legally eligible for adoption. We share all the known facts (positive factors as well as problems) about the baby's heredity and his development and personality, together with our conviction that the baby is adoptable and has every potentiality for continued growth and development.

The adoption program is now carried by an adoption worker and is naturally under the supervision of one supervisor. Our program is comparatively small: the average number of children placed for adoption yearly is eight to ten. The program at present provides for a six-months boarding period in the adoptive home. This practice is partially a vestige left over from our previous way of doing adoptions. Administratively, it is considered a safeguard in that the children that we place for adoption are the children who are rejected by the regular adoption agency. They are the children who have problems in their backgrounds or in their early development. While each baby has a mental test in his temporary home before he is considered for adoptive placement, these early tests at three or four months of age are not

always infallible. We are in the process of reconsidering the value of the boarding period, especially for those older babies whose capacity and rate of growth have been well established. After six months in his adoptive home the child is retested, and if his development has continued normally and the adjustment in the home is satisfactory, the adoptive family can then go on to a free home basis. At this point, the adoptive parents are interviewed by the supervisor of adoption. In this free home interview a general review takes place, and there is a mutual consideration of what the free home period entails. The free home period provides the adoptive parents with a greater opportunity to assume more and more aspects of parenthood for the child. The free home period is usually for six months, but can extend further if there should be any need for this.

We feel that our babies are comparable to the babies placed by many regular adoption agencies. It is because the Child Adoption Committee is not set up for long periods of study of children whose backgrounds are open to question, that our babies stand out in the community as different. While we have convictions about the babies' capacities, we do nevertheless have to meet questions in the community about our babies, and have to deal with them honestly and helpfully. Also, because our babies are the babies with problems, we need to know our babies as well as at all possible before their adoptive placement, so as to give both baby and adoptive parents whatever security we can. While we still have much to learn in this area, we have conviction that one can get a real feeling of a baby, his personality and capacities, within the early weeks and beginning months of his life. We are ready to place babies early, even when there is some question; but we do want to know the baby as well as we can and know clearly the question we have, so that we can choose the most suitable home for him. Along with all other adoption agencies we want to develop our skills still further, so as to place babies earlier and earlier.

NEW LEAGUE PUBLICATION

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN WITH PATHOLOGY IN THEIR BACKGROUNDS: Report of Workshop held April 12, 1949, under auspices of Child Welfare League of America. 1949. 15 pp. Price 40 cents.

Handbook on Planning Regional Conferences. Revised May, 1949. Price \$1.00. Detailed discussion of how to plan a regional conference with illustrative forms of announcements and programs and tickets for use at such conferences.

THE CHALLENGE TO RESEARCH*

Gunnar Dybwad

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The basic self-study and evaluation of practice which agencies need to serve children more effectively.

If we pose as our first question, "Why do we need research?" the simplest answer might be: To explain and evaluate what we have done in the past; to be able to defend or even to understand what we are doing now; and to plot the guideposts of future planful action. We know many things which we cannot prove to the public as facts of broad validity. We members of the Child Welfare League will have to run hard and long to catch up with business and industry and agriculture, who long since have recognized that it is to their own advantage to submit their present procedures and their future plans to the objective and penetrating scrutiny of the research worker.

In its plea for national legislation to facilitate research in child life, the American Parents Committee points out that in 1947 the Army and Navy together spent \$500,000,000 for research, and the Department of Agriculture spent \$13,000,000, of which no less than \$1,300,000 worth of research was spent on cows; as contrasted with the magnificent sum of \$50,000 available to the Children's Bureau for research (1/26th of the amount spent for research on cows).

Some of you may want to rationalize this by saying that we can hardly do the research in child welfare unless we first get the money for it; but it ill behooves us to wait for the public to do our planning. Agriculture is willing to spend millions on the testing of cows and sows because it has in years past been presented with research projects which provided in understandable fashion a practical answer to specific, acute problems.

Two years ago Arlien Johnson, in her presidential address to the National Conference which she entitled "Science and Social Work," contended that since man's inherited human nature has changed little in thousands of years, common human needs persist; and that the biologists, psychologists, and anthropologists have produced a wealth of facts that document this statement. Yet, also, the one book which during the past two years has been attacked most viciously by the critics of the programs of Aid to Dependent Children in many states has been a publication of the Federal Security Agency entitled,

* From a paper given at the League's program, National Conference of Social Work, Cleveland, June 15, 1949.

Common Human Needs. Could the trouble be that this excellent volume contains our viewpoints, however well founded, rather than scientific evidence?

And to what extent can we point to "what science teaches" when it comes to the placement of handicapped children for adoption, the separation of the child born out of wedlock from his mother, or the group care of infants under three months, preliminary to adoptive placements? We know that a worker who carries 35 cases can see his clients more often and write more pages of recording than a worker with a caseload of 50 or 60; but is it not time that we determined through scientific procedures the results encountered by either one of these two workers, and the factors on which these results are based?

The second question immediately develops: "Who should do the research?" In defense of many people who have in the past given thoughtful service to social work in leadership positions, it should be pointed out here that their failure to press for social work research was not due merely to negligence or to preoccupation with their particular realms of function; but was due, rather, to their conviction that their profession merely had the task of transforming into action, for the sake of community welfare, the findings developed by the social and biological sciences. Only recently, this viewpoint that social workers are practitioners, and not researchers, was brought up once more at a meeting of a national committee of experts in the field of child life.

Necessity and Feasibility of Research

I want to submit here that, as social workers, we must either relinquish the claim of constituting a professional group, or we must acknowledge that one of the basic criteria of a profession is its use of scientific analysis in constant self-evaluation. This is not meant to be a declaration of our independence from the research activities of other groups. Rather, we must ever develop what Philip Klein calls our partnership with the social and biological sciences. We must freely acknowledge the basic support we have acquired by utilizing the findings of other sciences, but with it we must also emphasize our own competence to apply the scientific approach to problems of human relationships.

There will undoubtedly be some who, while acknowledging the general responsibility of the field of

(Continued on page 13)

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

"For Every Child a Home. . . ."

Really His Own

THE number one worry in the field of child welfare today is that too many children spend too much of their childhood in institutions or in boarding homes. Separated from their families in infancy or in early childhood, they grow up without really knowing that feeling of safety that comes from living like "children are supposed to" in their own homes. Few of these children are orphans. Most have at least one parent, often one who visits regularly.

The worry is not that the children are neglected. Generally they have good food, adequate clothing and opportunities for schooling perhaps better than their own parents might have been able to provide. Many participate fully in the life of their foster families, help with the chores, share in the fun and are loved and wanted. Often their own parents are made to feel most welcome. They may come to Sunday dinner and join in the foster family outings.

Unfortunately some children are moved about from home to home because of fortuitous circumstances, because of poor agency policies, or for lack of skilled casework staff. These children are not only bewildered but most seriously hurt by these frequent uprootings.

But children who continue to live with the same foster family, who appear to be well adjusted and to have a close relationship with their own parents and their foster parents, are also bewildered. They are bewildered by the fact that they are, and yet are not, part of their foster family, that their own parents are, and yet are not, parents. These children do not have the security of truly belonging to any family.

And yet we know that long-time separation of children from their own parents, no matter how unavoidable, hurts children seriously. We know that what children need most of all is to be deeply, unshakably rooted in a family . . . as a tree is deeply rooted in the earth, to share in the joys and sorrows of a family by inalienable right, not by indulgence.

To save the child's own home has been the expressed goal of the children's agencies all during the years. Actually, however, we have been altogether too busy getting much-needed roofs over children's heads and correcting the unintended, but nonetheless serious, effects of the emptiness of many institutional programs. In all but lip service, parents were treated as lost. They had proved that they could not give their children the care they needed.

During the past ten years, aroused by the yearning of children for their parents, we have tried to "keep parents in the picture." But this fantasy of parenthood satisfied neither child nor parent completely. We did not understand in spite of ample evidence that parenthood must be nourished by satisfactions that come from being adequate parents, as children blossom when nourished in the warmth of loving parenthood. And we did not understand that often parents who seem most disinterested, who are seriously negligent, may only be so because they see no way of becoming the adequate parents they would so want to be. Parents and children can have true significance for one another only if the parents can be helped to act as parents normally do.

Placement away from home is at times unquestionably the only possible way of helping parents and children. But do children once removed have to spend their entire childhood away from their own homes? Do they have to remain uprooted? What can be done to assure these children their birthright—a home truly their own? These questions were raised at three of the League's conferences this year. And they are being asked by agencies in other regions more and more often.

And so we in the field of child welfare stand challenged by this newly revealed horizon to set as our goal that all children shall be enabled to grow up with their own families. And child placement agencies are challenged to take their responsibility for making sure that placed children shall return to their own homes as soon as the home can provide adequate care, that no child shall be severed from his family when that can be avoided.

But where permanent separation is to the best interest of the child and his parent, agencies can help the parent free the child so that he may become really a member of the family in which he must "live forever."

A goal of such magnitude requires the skill and the good will of community, board of trustees and the staff. It is up to the Child Welfare League member agencies to start the new day.

HENRIETTA L. GORDON



MIMEOGRAPHED REPORT

The Two R's—Responsibility and Representation of the function and duties of the Board of Trustees, from a paper presented at the League's program at National Conference of Social Work, June, 1949, by George Newbury. Price 20 cents.

FEDERAL INCOME TAX PROCEDURES FOR CHILD-PLACING AGENCIES AND FOSTER PARENTS

Both the Children's Bureau of the Federal Security Agency and the Child Welfare League of America have received many inquiries regarding income tax procedures in connection with money received by foster parents for the boarding of children. In July, 1949, Mrs. Henrietta L. Gordon of the Child Welfare League and Miss I. Evelyn Smith of the Children's Bureau conferred with an official of the Bureau of Internal Revenue in Washington, D. C., about Federal income tax procedures with respect to child-placing agencies and foster parents. The information obtained in this conference and in previous correspondence is summarized below.

Child-Placing Agencies

If a child-placing agency pays an amount in excess of \$600 a year to a boarding parent, it is necessary for the agency to report the payment on Form 1099, along with payments to staff and to other individuals. The report does not necessarily mean that the boarding parent will have to pay a tax on this amount.

Foster Homes

Boarding Homes

The position of the Bureau of Internal Revenue with respect to arrangements made by taxpayers with welfare organizations for the care and maintenance of children in their homes is that such taxpayers are generally motivated by humanitarian and charitable considerations when they undertake such responsibilities, and that they do not ordinarily expect to profit therefrom. However, it is required that the taxpayer report as income the total amount received in payment for boarding care of children. This cannot be omitted on the assumption that the expense of caring for the child equals or exceeds the amount.

The taxpayer who is a boarding parent is entitled to deduct the net expenses of maintenance of the child or children cared for in the taxpayer's home. All that would be necessary in making deductions would be a reasonable estimate of the expenses. Receipts would probably not be required. It was pointed out, however, that receipts might be required if the Collector of Internal Revenue in the district felt the requirement to be advisable. This is in accordance with the provision of Sec. 29.23 (a)-2 (c) of Income Tax Regulations 111, as follows: "Claim for the deductions referred to herein must be substantiated, when required by the Commissioner, by evidence showing in detail the amount and nature of the expenses incurred."

The estimate of expenses would include such items as food, rent and heat, gas and light, cleaning supplies and household replacements, laundry, and recreation, which are the usual items included in computing the board rates to be paid.

It must be established to the satisfaction of the Collector that the boarding care of children is not a profit-making venture. In all probability, a statement from the child-placing agency that it considers the amount paid for board during the year less than the boarding parents would have to expend for the care of the child would establish the fact that such care was not a profit-making venture. Such a statement might be sent to the boarding parent by the agency with the last check sent out in the calendar year.

The income and expenses of boarding care would be reported as though care were a business entered into, on Form 1040, page 2, schedule C. Total receipts would be entered under point 1, and costs under point 6.

1. *Expenses equal to payments received:* If the taxpayer shows that the expenses of caring for the children are equal to the amount of reimbursement received from the agency, these items would cancel each other.

2. *Expenses exceed payments received:* If the expenses incurred for maintenance of the children exceed the amount of board payments received, the taxpayer may deduct the excess as a charitable contribution (up to 15% of gross income as provided by law) to the agency. In this event, it would be necessary, as well as advantageous to the taxpayer, to itemize his deductions instead of taking the standard \$500 deduction.

3. *Expenses less than payments received:* If the payments received for boarding care are sufficiently large to more than offset the legitimate expenses

related to such income, care is assumed to be a transaction entered into for profit. In such cases, the amount received in excess of the related expenses is entered as profit, and a tax must be paid on this, provided the boarding parent's total income places him in the group required to pay income tax.

Claims for refunds: In cases where boarding parents have paid income tax in previous years on the amounts received for boarding children, and have not listed deductible expenses, it would be possible for them to file with the Collector of Internal Revenue a claim for a refund on Form 843. This can be done within 3 years from the time the return was filed, or within 2 years from the time the tax was paid, whichever period expires later. Such a claim for a refund would probably be allowed if accompanied by a statement from the child-placing agency, depending upon the determination made by the Collector. If the Collector does not allow the claim, the taxpayer may request that the Collector send the claim to the Internal Revenue Agent in charge. If not allowed by the Internal Revenue Agent, the taxpayer may request that the claim be sent to the technical staff of the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Free Homes

If a taxpayer is caring for a child for an agency, and providing the home free of charge to the agency, the taxpayer may deduct the cost of maintenance of the child as a charitable contribution (up to 15% of gross income as provided by law) to the agency.

Adoptive Homes

The above provision does not apply to free homes which are adoptive homes. Expenses incurred by a taxpayer who contemplates the adoption of a child taken into his home are considered personal expenses, not charitable contributions.

GUIDE MANUAL FOR CHILDREN'S INSTITUTIONS

A MANUAL for children's institutions has recently been developed by the Children's Institution Committee of the Children's Division of the Health and Welfare Council of Philadelphia. Although it appears in mimeograph, it is very readable. The line-drawn illustrations add to its attractiveness. What impressed us most, of course, was the content. Some of it, like the sections on administration, personnel and employment practices are of general interest to the field of child welfare. The program of the institution is of special interest to institution workers, though everyone in child care will be interested in the philos-

ophy and practice described. Take, for example, the paragraph on Case Work with the Family:

This really begins with the first interview and should be a continuous process. Its objectives are to develop in the child a sense of security while in the institution, and to prepare for his eventual return to the home if this is at all possible. To further this end, family ties are encouraged and strengthened and efforts directed toward helping the family prepare for this return.

Of particular interest is the section that discusses the board of managers, its structure, selection and preparation for service.

Structure. A single board, composed of both men and women, is preferable to the practice of having two boards, one usually made up of men concerned with financial management, the other of women whose chief function is direction of the household affairs. This is out of line with present-day welfare and business practices. It seems obvious that men and women working together on the same board will bring about smoother, sounder and more efficient management. Members whose primary interest is in finance will obtain desirable firsthand knowledge of the needs of the children, while those charged with meeting specific problems will have the knowledge of financial limitations and resources necessary to the best use of available funds. Financial control should be vested in the whole board.

Selection and Orientation of Board Members

Before persons are approached concerning service on the board of an institution, there should be assurance that they can make a real contribution. It is wise to seek able individuals who are not in such demand that their time and interest are already fully occupied. An invitation to serve should be accompanied by full information as to the heavy duties and responsibilities involved. Board members should represent a variety of interests and occupations, such as health, education, law, business, home management—to mention only a few of the useful backgrounds.*

Preparation for Service. Board members must have an interest in the welfare of children and should have knowledge of good standards of child care in the fields of health, recreation and education. They should be informed as to the accepted methods of group care as developed by local and national authorities in the field. To judge the effectiveness of the institution, they should be able to look beyond such obvious matters as cleanliness, order and disciplinary conformity and sense the underlying spirit as revealed in the attitudes of the children, their interest in the activities and the atmosphere of good fellowship.

Board members should be acquainted with the history, purpose and policies of the institution, its charter and by-laws, the state and local regulations under which it operates, its staff and its physical facilities. Furthermore, they should be alive to the child-care needs of their community as a whole and know how the work of their institution fits into the picture.

Much printed material is available on the subject of institution management and ways in which institutions can meet the community needs. Local and national experts stand ready to give assistance. Some sources are the Health and Welfare Council, the Child Welfare League of America, the United States Children's Bureau.

This pamphlet is available through the Health and Welfare Council, 311 South Juniper Street, Philadelphia, Pa. Price \$1.00.

* A file of board member prospects is a valuable resource for a nominating committee.

THE CHALLENGE TO RESEARCH

(Continued from page 9)

social work to do its own research, will nevertheless point out that they would hardly be in a position to participate in this endeavor, since the very specialization and smallness of their agencies would make it impossible to conduct large-scale inquiries which, after all, would be needed for research. That this is a wrong premise was quite clearly developed by Robert C. Angell, the distinguished sociologist, in a symposium on research at the 1942 meeting of the American Orthopsychiatric Association.

Dr. Angell pointed out that the number of new cases which are necessary to the verification of an hypothesis varies with its character; and that a simple generalization in a complex field, such as an hypothesis that broken homes produce delinquent children, must obviously be submitted to a large number of tests; whereas, if a complex hypothesis is put forward to cover a not-too-complex situation, it may be verified by a relatively small number of cases.

Applied to our situation in the child welfare field, does this not mean that there is indeed a place for the small children's agency, specializing in the placement of children with difficult behavior problems, to make a substantial contribution to social work research through a careful analysis of the factors operative in the agency function, if only this inquiry is conducted in keeping with the principles of scientific research?

But who in our agencies should do the research? Is it not true that we must turn to other professions to carry out our research because our own casework staff shows lack of interest, if not outright aversion toward research activities? I think the answer to this is given emphatically by David French in his editorial foreword to the American Association of Social Workers' newest pamphlet, *The Contribution of Research to Social Work*, when he says,

"We confront a need for clear recognition that research is a specialization in social work—a specialization centered around skills, process and knowledge of research methods as applied to the areas of social work practice."

If we accept this dictum of Mr. French, then we must raise our next question: "How do we train social workers for research?" The interim reports of the Study of Social Work Education which is being undertaken at the present time indicate that this study will indeed arrive at the conclusion that our schools of social work should develop courses which will provide training for specialized research work as the concern of all aspects of social work, just as it does now provide for a specialization in medical or

psychiatric social work. However, our problem will not be solved by asking our schools of social work to turn out each year a (hopefully) adequate number of specialists in social research. Once more we must say that, if we are to be considered a profession, then every member of the social work profession must be prepared to understand, accept and apply scientific methods of analysis. This is how Dr. Youngdahl* last year put this problem squarely before the schools of social work:

"A graduate degree in social work should mean . . . that the individual knows enough about the scientific method in research to be able to recognize errors or validity in conclusions and to suggest study projects which may be helpful in the functioning of his agency or his work."

Urgent Needs for Study

What type of research, then, is needed in social work? Philip Klein† suggests the following five categories:

1. Studies to establish, identify and measure the need for service.
2. Studies to measure the services offered as they relate to needs. (Both these types of studies would clearly have an orientation toward planning of services and planning of agency structure. With these we might include also administrative studies and cost studies.)
3. Studies to test, gauge, and evaluate results of social work operation.
4. Studies to test the efficacy of special techniques, be it casework procedures of one school versus those of another, probation versus institutional care, child guidance by teamwork versus guidance by casework or psychiatrist, group therapy versus individual therapy, etc. (In this Dr. Klein includes differences in organizational patterns, merger of agencies or multiple function within a casework agency, intake, etc.)
5. Studies and methodology of research.

It has been said so often that it hardly bears repeating, and yet must be stated here once more that, before we can proceed further in social work research, we will need to agree on a definite terminology. As it is, much time and money-consuming effort is lost because the findings of one study are not transferable to another because the two do not employ the same terminology. I think we must differentiate clearly between the danger that we all might be made to think alike and the necessity that we all should be able to express our thinking in terms which are understandable to the rest of the group. The

* Dr. Benjamin E. Youngdahl, Dean, The George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University.

† Professor of Social Work, New York School of Social Work.

least we should be able to find out is wherein and to what extent we are in disagreement.

To me, it is extremely significant that in my state a small agency which has always excelled in the quality of service it gives to the community is, nevertheless, the one which has asked loudest and most persistently, "Are we doing the most we can do for our community, with the means at our command?" Their board members are not merely satisfied in doing a good job with the needs they recognized in yesteryears; they are keenly aware that the endowments they hold are a public trust which puts them under obligation to offer their uttermost to meet the needs of today, and to this end they are willing to adjust their program to changing times.

What would happen if such soul-searching scrutinizing were undertaken by child welfare agencies across the country? How many agencies would have to accept the grim knowledge that they are representing themselves in their community as giving service which a staff three times the size that they now possess would no longer be able to fulfill adequately?

When we next consider projects in measuring the effectiveness of specific techniques, we face a situation which is very similar to the difficulty in measuring needs or services: once again the practitioners in our child welfare agencies are not agreeing on the definitions of their various techniques; and so each project forms an isolated unit, often clearly understandable only to one who is thoroughly acquainted with that particular agency's policies and practices. Furthermore, to study results in social adjustments, one must of necessity undertake long-range research projects, long-range at least in terms of follow-up—not for just one or two years after the case was closed by the agency, but for five, ten years and more.

Perhaps the answer to many of these implied and direct questions I have raised in this paper are found if we could comply with Dr. Klein's demands for studies in the methodology of research.

How can we measure adequately service to unmarried mothers and their children? How do we determine success and failure in an institutional program which so definitely involves the child's physical, intellectual, social and emotional growth? What criteria have we developed to compare one group of children with those of another agency, if we wish to review their respective progress?

The Board's Responsibility

It should be clear that responsibility to initiate and sponsor research in child welfare agencies, public or private, must rest with governing boards, and hence it is particularly appropriate to repeat here

what a board member had to say on this subject at a Child Welfare League meeting during last year's conference in Atlantic City. In an address, "A Board Member Speaks on Our Responsibility for Research," Mr. James Brown commented:

"There are a few children's agencies which have made a beginning in research, but most of us have resorted to research only in emergencies. We wait until we get seriously snarled up or become uncomfortable under criticism from the community, and then cry loudly for our good friends at the Child Welfare League or our local Council of Social Agencies to come to our immediate rescue with a 'study'. . . .

"I do not believe that research can any longer be considered a luxury, and I am sure that if we are going to discharge our trusteeship effectively, we must begin to give a more important place to it right now."

A first obligation of any board, then, is to make available for research purposes an amount of money which is commensurate with the size of the agency's operation, regardless whether this involves tax money, community chest support or endowment. Next, the board will have to make sure that they have on the staff workers who have the skill and the time required for research work, and an executive who has at least the ability to recognize the agency's tasks in research and the willingness to facilitate them.

A further obligation incumbent on the board pertains to the absolute necessity that research activities not be interfered with by dictates of convenience or, worse yet, defensiveness. If the agency cannot afford a qualified research supervisor of its own (and few will be able to do so), then the board must get outside consultation to ascertain that the methods and procedures of the particular project were sound, and the conclusions warranted by the findings. To "doctor up" a research report is about as silly and futile as to alter an x-ray report.

Finally, the board, with and through its research workers, must join in co-operative research planning not only with other agencies, but also with representatives from the social and biological sciences.

The Need for Emphasis on Research

In view of the dire necessity of making an emphasis on research the order of the day, some boards of smaller agencies who are faced anyhow with readjustment of their functions in the community, might consider making research their primary activity, much as we have such centers developed by the medical and psychological professions. In this connection we should take another look at the suggestion

of Herta Kraus in her article, "The Future of Social Work,"* that some voluntary agencies consider abandoning their isolated service units in favor of a new partnership with the public agency, which would take the form of a research unit (or other consultant service) within the public agency, but staffed and operated by the voluntary agency. This proposal is surely no panacea, but merely one of many ways of combining the efforts of public and private welfare work.

As we come to the close of this short and necessarily sketchy summary, a final question presents itself: "How shall the finished research product be utilized?"

Aside from the rather obvious application of the study's conclusions as far as the immediate agency is concerned, effective planning from a broader viewpoint makes it imperative that the research (findings as well as conclusions) be shared by others. Once more the problem of semantics arises: The joy of professionalism in accentuating petty differences in terminology versus plain, common but effective English. Moreover, in order to be available, the research project must be suitably multigraphed or printed, and an effort made to let it reach those who would have an obvious professional concern. And finally: it must become known, must be carried in reference lists, and be indexed.

It is for this purpose that there was organized last year in the Children's Bureau the Clearinghouse for Research in Child Life under the directorship of Dr. Clara E. Councell. The Clearinghouse proposes to collect from and distribute to research workers information about current studies in the various fields affecting child life. It stands to reason that the success of this undertaking will rest squarely on the degree of co-operation from agencies who have produced research. If the Clearinghouse becomes a successful venture, we can systematize our research efforts and plot a chart of accomplishments and of needs yet to be met.

Be not mistaken: research in child life goes on in our country full blast every day, at a cost of thousands of dollars. Only, it is the manufacturers of baby clothes, of teenagers' jeans and fingertip coats, of bubble gum and soda pop who are the sponsors. Let us resolve, here and now, that in the best spirit of competitive enterprise we shall run counter to this overemphasis on shallow materialism and gain support for our research, which should forever be aimed at preserving and strengthening those true values on which rests the happiness of our children.

* In *The Compass*, January, 1948, Vol. XXIX, No. 1.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Campaign for Negro Adoptions*

WE thought you would be interested in knowing that we have placed seven Negro children for adoption since Christmas—as many as we had placed in the previous five years. With a total of 28 adoption placements in that five-month period, the percentage is good. Even more surprising, in view of the fact that we have come to realize that the problem of finding adoption homes for Negro children is nationwide, is the fact that in the past month we have received 25 requests for children, ten of which came from the following states: Alabama, Michigan, New York, North and South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia. This poses for us a problem in co-operative work with agencies in other states, in order that no good home be lost while Negro children needing adoptive homes are still unprovided for. The response received from our publicity and community organization to secure more adoptive applicants proves that our efforts have been effective, and we want to share with you the steps which we feel have brought this about.

In June, 1948, we went to one of the three Negro newspapers in Newark and asked them to print a picture of a baby who was free for adoption. Underneath the picture was printed, "Would you like to adopt a baby like this one? If so, write or telephone ____." The name, address and telephone number of agency followed. This picture brought in six inquiries.

The following November, we began the organization of a Committee composed largely of Negro people who would be interested in making known in their respective clubs and churches, and among their personal friends, the needs of the children in our agency who were waiting for us to find parents for them. The people approached regarding serving on the Committee were suggested by personal friends, the two near-by Urban Leagues and the Welfare Council. The list of people invited was composed of doctors, ministers, housewives and social workers. After the first meeting, news releases were sent to all the local newspapers, both Negro and white. No inquiries regarding adoptions followed this particular release, but it did serve toward interesting the community in the problems the Negro children were facing.

In March, 1949, pictures similar to the one just described were placed in two of the Negro papers by the agency. Following this, there were thirty-one inquiries. During the same month the need for applicants was announced over a local radio station program sponsored by one of the Negro papers, and followed by another announcement without pictures in the paper. In May, 1949, when officers were elected for the Committee, announcements were made in the entire press, both city and local, white and Negro. Shortly after this, the editor of one of the Negro papers, which had a very large circulation, became interested in the problem, and wanted to print pic-

* This subject was introduced in *CHILD WELFARE* in the Readers' Forum, October, 1948, page 9, and discussed in the Readers' Forum, December, 1948, page 11.

tures of the children needing placement in his paper for all New Jersey agencies. He got in touch with the chairman of our Committee, whom he knew, and our agency was approached. So far, two pictures have been run in this paper. The second was of the Committee chairman, who is a well-known Negro doctor, examining one of the babies. This picture has brought in 25 applicants to date. As far as possible, publicity has been focused to attract local applicants. However, when a given newspaper covers the entire Eastern seaboard, inquiries and interest are aroused in the whole section.

We are most concerned in serving and meeting the needs of people who have written to us from out of the state. Many of the letters received from the South have been most promising. We have recently contacted out-of-state agencies, both public and private, in the expectation that the requests of these applicants may be met locally. If not, we hope that through the co-operation of other agencies by home study and post-placement supervision, adoptions may be made through our agency, for we have noticed a keen desire on the part of many couples to adopt a child who comes from a locality far removed from its natural parents.

Our agency had been very much discouraged prior to the organization of its Committee and the help offered by the press. We already feel more confident in our planning and our work with the unmarried mother, with the knowledge that the community is lending its strength in finding suitable homes for its babies. While it is too early to make an analysis of all of the inquiries we have received, or to predict what proportion of them will be acceptable, there is one fact which seems obvious; namely, when the problem is genuinely shared with those to whom it is most important, help will be forthcoming.

Adoptions are far from new to the Negro section of the community, but most of them have been planned either directly by the mother and the adopting couple, or through the services of a doctor, minister or interested friend. The black market in babies which extorts from both the mother and the adopting parents in the case of white adoptions is unknown in the case of the Negro child. Many of these placements are made, I believe, for a variety of reasons. First, there are many areas in which adoption services to the Negro are limited; seldom are they adequate. Long-time foster home placements are familiar to all, when adoption was indicated in the early stages of the child's life. Unmarried mother facilities for the Negro girl in many localities are almost non-existent, and in many communities are totally lacking. The natural referral between agencies is therefore hampered, and the Negro has been forced to meet his needs as best he can with whatever resources he has.

We are encouraged to hope that as our Committee grows in experience, and as our publicity expands, the children who are brought to our agency for adoption service will be helped to permanent placement, without the long delay we have encountered so often in the past.

MARGARET STUART

*Intake Supervisor, Children's Aid and Protective Society of the
Oranges and Maplewood, Orange, N. J.*

LEAGUE CONFERENCE PLANS

National Conference

Plans are already under way for the 1950 conferences of the League. The National Conference of Social Work, at which the Child Welfare League will hold sessions, will be held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, April 23 to 29, 1950. League headquarters will be at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. The League Program Chairman is Dr. Gunnar Dybwad, Supervisor of the Children's Division, Michigan State Department of Social Welfare, Lansing, Michigan. The Vice-Chairman is Miss Ora Pendleton, Director of the County Agency Department of the Children's Aid Society of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia.

In line with the reorganization of the schedule for the entire National Conference of Social Work, the Child Welfare League meetings will be held all day Tuesday and all day Thursday, April 25 and 27, 1950. The first meeting of the Program Planning Committee for the League sessions was held in New York on July 22, 1949. Numerous written suggestions were sent in to complement those made by the Committee members in attendance at the Planning Meeting. Among them were the suggestions that attention be given to the psychiatric treatment of children in placement; to casework with adolescents; and to research in child welfare. The group felt that there was need for future programs on the administration, desirable organization, and functions of child-caring agencies. It was pointed out that with improvements in methods of keeping statistics, we are in a better position to analyze what is happening to children and what types of service are currently needed. The Committee felt strongly that more work needs to be done in short-time and emergency care, since much of this important work is now being carried on by agencies outside the child welfare field.

We invite comments on these and other subjects which you would like to see discussed at the National Conference. We urgently request that you send us information regarding research, administrative studies, and new projects which have been undertaken. Regional Conference chairmen would, we know, be delighted to receive similar suggestions and information for regional conference programs.

Regional Conferences

Five regional conferences are being planned. We hope to announce the details of all conferences in the next issue of *CHILD WELFARE*. The plans now completed, and those agreed upon tentatively, are as follows:

The Eastern Regional Conference will be held in New York City, February 27 and 28, at the Roosevelt Hotel. The Chairman will be Miss Margaret Barbee, Executive Director of the Sheltering Arms Children's Service, New York.

The New England Regional Conference will be under the chairmanship of Mr. Robert M. Mulford, General Secretary, Massachusetts S.P.C.C., Boston. The place and dates have not yet been decided.

The Southern Regional Conference will be held in Shreveport, Louisiana, and is scheduled tentatively for March 6, 7 and 8. Miss Inez M. Baker, Supervisor of the Children's Division, New Orleans Department of Public Welfare, has accepted the chairmanship.

The Central Regional Conference (formerly entitled the Ohio Valley Regional Conference) will be held in Toledo, Ohio, March 16, 17 and 18, with headquarters at the Commodore Perry Hotel. Mr. Wendell F. Johnson, Director, The Child and Family Agency of Toledo, is Chairman.

The Midwest Regional Conference is scheduled to be held in Minneapolis, the tentative dates being June 5, 6 and 7. Headquarters will be the Nicollet Hotel. The Chairman will be Mr. Clark W. Blackburn, Executive Secretary of the Family and Children's Service in Minneapolis.

READERS' FORUM

May 22, 1949

Dear Editor:

Mr. Hirschbach's article, "A Changing Direction for Children's Institutions,"* examines the development of these institutions and comes to the conclusion that the picture is "an encouraging one of services being improved, enlarged and refined" and that immeasurable gains have been made. Acknowledging the vital contributions of the cottage parents to this progress, he points out that this work more and more is being carried on by well-educated men and women with special knowledge and training in the child care field. Nevertheless, Mr. Hirschbach feels that the trend in the direction of better working conditions and shorter working hours for cottage parents—possibly heading toward the existing social standard of the eight-hour day—affects adversely the relationship and work with the children. He wonders whether

"the admirable program of improving the status and the working conditions of institutional employees has not overreached itself and begun to defeat its purpose."

Or, as Mr. Alt, in his comments, formulates it more distinctly:

"How far, and at what point, does the improvement of working conditions of institutional employees, particularly the reduction of their work week, jeopardize essential elements of child rearing?"

As cottage parents of Pleasantville Cottage School, we feel that these questions have great bearing upon the future development of institutional child care and that we have a professional responsibility to examine them as objectively as possible in the light of our own experience.

Central Function of Cottage Parents

Mr. Hirschbach and Mr. Alt correctly put in the center of institutional child care the relationships that are established between the adult staff members, especially the cottage parents,† and the children. This is a source from which

"more than from any other treatment aspect, faith and hope and courage can be restored to a youngster who has been mistreated or pushed around."

Therefore the question of fulfilling the needs of the children becomes identical with the question: Is the development of profound and meaningful relationships with children hampered by a reduction in the

number of hours worked? It is our belief that the number of hours worked is not the decisive factor. What is decisive is the quality—not the quantity—of service to the children. Some of the essential qualitative elements are: the cottage atmosphere which the cottage parent helps to create; the way in which she works with the single child and the group; the mixture within her approach of warmth and understanding of the child's problems on the one hand, and that amount of firmness and consistency on the other hand which is indispensable for children: briefly, all those elements which eventually bring about that most important feeling of security in the child. Unless the cottage parent has the capacities and skills for effective work with children, she would not be able to achieve the desired relationships no matter how many hours she works. With regard to the cottage parent who does possess these capacities and skills, it has been our experience that the relationships with the children have not suffered with a reduction of the work week. If anything, they have reached higher levels, because—in accordance with Mr. Alt's statements that

"no employee can do a good job on the basis of 12 or 16 hours a day"

and that

"When burdens are too heavy, cottage parents, like own parents, begin to fail their children"

—we have found that the shorter work week has enabled cottage parents to get much-needed rest and recreation so that they are in a better position to give their best to the children.

The shorter work week has indeed made it necessary for additional cottage parents to work within one cottage, and this might conceivably hamper the development of relationships. That is, it could be that the cottage parents might compete for the affections of the child, or that the child would be confused as to whom he should relate himself. In our situation, there are three cottage parents who work with a particular cottage group: the cottage mother, cottage father and relief cottage parent. It is most important for these three cottage parents to work together in full harmony and agreement as a team; and, when this is achieved, we find that the child's need for relationships with the cottage parents is as adequately met as when, in former years, only one or two cottage parents were responsible for a particular cottage.

The Cottage Parent Team

The work of one cottage parent has to be a natural continuation of that of the other. It is essential that

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† In this discussion, the feminine gender is used with reference to the cottage parent. Actually, cottage parents are both men and women, of course.

they work out together the planning for the cottage and solutions to problems presented by the children; that they try to understand each other's point of view and incorporate it into practice if it has value for the children; that they keep each other fully informed about developments in the cottage (e.g., discussions held with social worker and psychiatrist); that they share equitably the tasks and responsibilities; and that they follow uniform practice in regard to household routines and regulations. Finally, the teamwork relationship is felt and observed by the child. This can be an important new experience for the selfish and self-centered child who does not co-operate with others, and for the child whose own parents are in conflict with each other.

The development of the cottage parent team is the key, not only to the problem of cottage parent-child relationships, but to all aspects of cottage life: the feeling of pride in, and responsibility for, the cottage that the children can have; their working co-operatively with each other and with the cottage parents toward the running of the cottage; their planning and carrying out as a cottage group social and recreational activities and projects, etc. It has also been our experience that, despite the shorter work week, cottage life has continued to be rich and meaningful to the children.

In talking about working hours, it cannot be overlooked that cottage parents in institutions generally do not devote their whole time to the living contact with the children. Everybody familiar with the work of cottage parents knows that part of their job consists of mechanical housekeeping work. Even though much of this is done together with the children, there is a certain portion of it which is left to the cottage parent herself. Similarly, cottage parents may be called upon to do work outside the cottage, not related to their central functions with the children. In our institution, the planning is such that the household work done independently of the children occupies only a small fraction of the cottage parent's hours and is related to her central functions; and that a cottage parent is called upon for duty outside her central functions only in cases of emergency. However, it is conceivable that in other institutions, cottage parents may be carrying responsibilities which are not within their functions. If this is so, it goes without saying that a reduction of these hours would not impair in the least the relationship between cottage parents and children. It then becomes exclusively a matter of organizing the working hours of the cottage parents so that they are not taken away from that which is their supreme task—the living together with the children.

The Need for Flexibility

Mr. Hirschbach and Mr. Alt seem to be quite concerned about cottage parents' working strictly on the basis of closely scheduled shifts, as in a factory. In this we share their concern. In our own case, it happens that the hours worked by a cottage parent are not scheduled consecutively, but are so spaced that she is on duty when the children are in the cottage, or when it is possible to work with their cottage group in activities outside the cottage. In addition, the cottage parent does not automatically go off duty promptly according to schedule, but will continue to work with the children if the situation requires it. In other words, the schedule is followed with flexibility and responsible good judgment. There are provisions for compensatory time off when overtime is put in.

In conclusion, Mr. Hirschbach regards the improvement in the working conditions of the cottage parents as a danger for the institutions and thinks therefore that some "reversal of the pendulum is wanted quite desperately." Would this not involve a greater danger? One can hardly turn back the wheel of history and one can hardly reverse established social standards of working hours and working conditions generally. In trying it, however, it could readily happen that the

"well educated men and women with special knowledge and training in the child care field"

would be replaced by less educated men and women with less knowledge and training. Would this be to the benefit of the children? May we suggest, instead, that we keep ever in mind the point made by Mr. Hirschbach that a considerable reduction of the working hours for the cottage parents was not only necessary, but was an indispensable prerequisite for the favorable development of the institutions. In view of this, may we further suggest that the reconciliation between

"our goal of decent working conditions and the needs of the children"

—as Mr. Alt states the problem—be done by going forward rather than backward. This should be in the direction of higher professional standards of performance and working conditions than have been achieved thus far for cottage parents in the child care field.

Sincerely,

VICTOR ORNSTEIN, ELLIS PINCOFF LISSNER,
ELLA GOLDSTEIN, AURELIA G. BLUMENTHAL,
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BOOK NOTE

STATE CHILD LABOR STANDARDS, BULLETIN No. 98. By Lucy Manning and Norene Diamond, Bureau of Labor Standards, U.S. Department of Labor, January, 1949. viii, 182 pp.

Child labor laws have been enacted by the legislatures of every state in the Union. As a result of the wide exchange of information between the states, these laws usually follow a fairly well-defined pattern, but more often in form than in substance. The laws themselves vary widely in the standards they set up for the employment of boys and girls—variations which have no meaningful reason, since the basic needs of children in one area are not appreciably different from the needs of children in any other. All children, regardless of where they live, need pretty much the same opportunities for rest, recreation, education and protection against exploitation and harmful kinds of employment.

To some extent, differences between one state child labor law and another have been offset by the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, which cuts across state lines and applies throughout the nation to any establishment producing goods for shipment in interstate or foreign commerce. While the Federal law supersedes any state law, it is limited in its application because of constitutional considerations, and unfortunately it does not reach down into many local child labor employing industries. Many child workers are thus not covered by the provisions of the Federal statute, and their only protection is the child labor law in their own state.

The authors of the pamphlet have performed an extremely useful service in bringing together in one short volume a clearly written state-by-state summary of laws affecting the employment of minors under 18 years of age.

The material for each state is instructively arranged under convenient topical headings which include the minimum age for work, employment certificate requirements, maximum hours of work, night work restrictions, occupations which are hazardous for young workers, compulsory school attendance provisions, workmen's compensation laws, and the name and address of each state agency authorized to enforce the child labor law.

The pamphlet is entirely factual and objective. The authors have not undertaken to judge the weak or strong points of any of the state statutes, and have reported only what exists rather than what is desirable. As a reference work it will prove to be an extremely handy volume, but child welfare workers in each state will want to go behind the factual in-

formation and see how their own state measures up to acceptable standards for employing children and young persons.

Are children under 16 in *your* state permitted to work during school hours at cost of educational opportunity? Are children under 18 safeguarded from injuries and deaths by prohibitions against employment in particularly dangerous jobs? Are school-children of 14 and 15 being permitted to work excessively long hours after school? Are growing children being deprived of an opportunity for rest and recreation by working nights or for long hours? Are physical examinations required before a young person obtains an employment certificate permitting him to work?

Only 19 states have established a 16-year minimum age for work during school hours, and even in these states some of the child labor laws are riddled by exemptions so that children under 16 may be excused from school for work in certain occupations. Twenty-one states have no prohibition regarding night work employment of 16- and 17-year-old minors. Only 16 states have enacted an 8-hour day for boys and girls under 18, and a 40-hour work-week for these youngsters has been enacted in only 5 states.

Fortunately, in some states actual employment conditions are far more favorable than the laws would suggest, and the realistic picture about child labor and youth employment may not be quite so black as might appear from the archaic provisions of some of the state laws. Nevertheless, it is apparent that a good deal of work still remains to be done to raise state child labor standards to more desirable levels. Each state agency concerned with improving the welfare of children would do well to leaf through this volume to find out where its own state stands on child labor legislation, and to work for remedial legislation and improved administration wherever shortcomings are revealed.

While the book is not a definitive and detailed statement of all the provisions of all the laws affecting the employment of young people, it summarizes the major provisions of the more important laws in simple, non-technical terms. It can be used with great profit by persons working in the fields of education, child labor and youth employment, and by civic groups concerned with improving the welfare of young people. The pamphlet is available without cost to any person working in these and related areas.

SOL MARKOFF

*Assistant Secretary,
National Child Labor Committee*

Essentials of Adoption Law and Procedure

The revision of the pamphlet, *Essentials of Adoption Law and Procedure*, has recently been issued by the Children's Bureau of the Federal Security Agency. It differs from the preliminary draft of 1944 in recommending the following practices:

1. Use of the services of local child-placing agencies, as well as of the state Department of Welfare, in studying adoption situations and in making reports to the court:
(The primary function of the state Department of Welfare is seen as that of strengthening local services, rather than that of going into every adoption case. The social study and the report would be made by the state Department of Welfare or by an agency which it designates, or by the authorized agency, if any, which placed the child in the home for adoption.)
2. Omission of a provision for an interlocutory decree:
(No interlocutory decree is needed to fix responsibility for the child prior to the final decree, since it is recommended either that action be taken prior to the adoption petition to terminate parental rights and fix responsibility for the child; or that the person having responsibility for the child continue to exercise this responsibility until the final decree. Under the provisions of these essentials, there is no need for a hearing until the period of supervised residence has been completed.)
3. Requirement that the period of residence be under supervision by the state Department of Welfare or by an agency which it designates, for a specified period:
(Inclusion of this provision in adoption laws should encourage filing of petitions in independent placements immediately after a child has been placed. This would make the social study more effective, as it could be made at the beginning of the placement rather than after the child has been in the home six months to a year or longer.)
4. Omission from the petition of identifying information concerning the natural parents when an agency has legally acquired the right to consent to the adoption;
5. Waiving consent of a child over a specified age if the court deems it for the best interest of the child, reason to be specified by the court in the order;
6. Refusal to allow withdrawal of consent after a petition for adoption has been filed, unless the court approves, and finds, in writing, that this is best for the child;
7. Holding final decree granting adoption to be effective as of the time the original petition was filed, thus protecting the child's inheritance rights in case one of the petitioners dies before the final decree has been rendered;
8. Specific provisions for the court to take the necessary steps to protect the best interests of the child if the petition is denied or withdrawn;
9. Omission of provision for annulment, since adoptive parents have the same resources available as do natural parents;
10. Stipulation that effective date of the law allow a reasonable period of time after the passage of the act, so that sound administration can be established.

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